Daniel Parrish: Witness to the California Gold Rush, Barbary Coast, and Shipwreck

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Chapter One

Shipwreck of the SS *Brother Jonathan*

The day of July 30, 1865 began with sunny skies and choppy seas as the steamship *Brother Jonathan* plied its way northwest of Crescent City, California. However, as the day passed, a squall suddenly rose up and became a shrieking gale. At 1 pm Captain DeWolf reversed course and proceeded southeast towards Crescent City harbor for shelter. Near Point St. George Reef, the ship struck the Dragon Rocks, craggy peaks of a half submerged, volcanic mountain. The wounded steamer took on sea water as the terrified and confused passengers moved about in desperation. Fragments of the broken hull and rudder floated beside the vessel. Of more than 244 aboard only 19 made shore in one lifeboat: that being 11 men, 5 women and 3 children. Daniel Parrish was not among those fortunate ones.

Well known on the Barbary Coast of San Francisco, Daniel's body was recovered days later near Crescent City and recognized. His body was one of only four transported on the steamship *Del Norte* to San Francisco for burial. Known later as 'the treasure ship', the *Brother Jonathan* still lies on the bottom of the ocean with its commercial cargo and immense treasure of gold coins and bars worth, in todays money, somewhere in the region of $50 million.

Two major events standout in the life of Daniel Parrish: the California Gold Rush and the shipwreck of the steamship *Brother Jonathan*. Between 1848 and 1855 about 300,000 people rushed to California when gold was found by James W. Marshall at Sutter's Mill in Coloma, California. The positive effects of the gold rush included the billions of dollars in gold that invigorated the US economy and other economies around the world. It accelerated the statehood of California. And it contributed to the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad. Less attractive was the attack and removal of whole groups of indigenous people from their land.

While we often think of the California Gold Rush as an American experience, it also brought people from Europe, Latin America, Australia and Asia. This influx of people enlarged San Francisco from a village of 200 inhabitants in 1846 to a cosmopolitan city of 36,000 by 1852, the year Daniel Parrish arrived in the city.

Chapter Two

The Parrish Family

Who was Daniel Parrish? Was he remarkable or an ordinary man, the witness of extraordinary events? He was not an aristocrat, politician or a wealthy elite, those that history usually records. But he did not belong to the lowest rungs of society either. We place him somewhere in the middle of the social ladder. He was educated. To what extent, we do not know. He was artistic. We know he was a musician. But in addition, he became a photographer, a hotelier on the Barbary Coast in San Francisco, a shipping agent, and victim of the famous Brother Jonathan shipwreck. And yes, he was, in some ways, representative of a certain segment of early San Francisco society and culture.

The difficulty of fleshing out the life and times of someone who was not nationally famous, infamous, or super wealthy becomes challenging especially when the era concerns early San Francisco during and shortly after the California

Gold Rush. The great San Francisco fire of 1906 caused an enormous loss of records. There remains today some primary sources such as newspaper accounts. Secondary sources range from census data, to journals, to contemporary books.

Given his early travels in the rough and tumble west, we can assume he could hold his own in a brawl. What we do know about him is that he was a part of early California history. He had a restless and entrepreneurial nature, always seeking to elevate himself in society but never quite reaching the apex. Constantly moving westward, he joined thousands of others who sought opportunity before, during and after the California Gold Rush era. Without doubt he was a quintessential American of the 19th century.

His emigrant ancestor, Thomas Parish came to the colonies in 1635 aboard the ship *Increase* at the age of 22.[1] Landing at Watertown, he removed to Cambridge in 1636 where he was known as a planter [Lechford 11-15]. He had been a clothier [Hotten 65] in England and, in Massachusetts, a sometimes physician [MBCR 2:53] indicating that he was educated. Admitted to Cambridge Church prior to April 1637, he also became a Cambridge selectman [CaTR 36,43] in October 1639 and again in November 1640. The paper trail ends before 1649. It appears he may have returned to England. We may wonder if he returned to England to fight in the English civil war as so many others did. If so he left a very young family.

The branch of the Parrish family with which we are concerned began with John Parrish (son of Thomas), Daniel Parrish's 4th great grandfather of Groton, Massachusetts. John was one of the original Proprietors of Groton, Massachusetts.[2] He was the Surveyor of Groton in 1680, on the Land Committee, a Sergeant and Ensign in the Massachusetts Militia in 1683, Constable in 1684, Selectman from 1686-1690, a Deputy to the General Court in 1693, and a man of civil and military honors. He and his family moved to Stonington, Connecticut in 1712 where he died in 1715.

Among the descendants of John Parrish was one Jasper Parrish [1767-1836], brother of Daniel Parrish's grandfather.[3] Captured by Munsee natives when 11 years old, he was kept in captivity, sold several times until freed after 6 years in 1784. Fluent in both Mohawk and Delaware languages, he had to attend school for one year to re-learn english. He later served as an interpreter for the Pickering Treaty and was employed by the Indian Department eventually being made Indian Agent by order of President George Washington.

From the 1820 federal census, we know the Parrish family had traveled on to Genesee County, New York, in the far west of the state, where Daniel Parrish, the subject of our interest, was born to Mason Clark and Abigail (nee Shaw) Parrish in 1818. Clark, as he was known, had established himself in the town of Alexander along with his brother William's family between 1810 and 1820. By 1830 Alexander had about 300 inhabitants, 3 churches, a hotel, and a flour mill. Between 1810 and 1820, a smaller Alexander was very much a frontier village.

1818, Daniel's birth year, was momentous for a number of reasons. The treaty of 1818 was signed in October establishing the 49th parallel as the boundary between the United States and British North America thus resolving some of the disputes between the two countries. And in the same year, Andrew Jackson invaded Florida in the Seminole War inflaming relations with Spain. This expansionism had begun with Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase and would continue in the 19th century through the Mexican-American War. The Parrish family continued to move westward as if they were swept along by a rising tide.

By the 1840 federal census, both Daniel Parrish and his older brother Ransom had removed 600 miles to Alden Township, McHenry County, Illinois along a route south of the finger lakes.[4] At the age of 22, Daniel Parrish is listed in the census in a household of 2 males aged between 20 and 29, one in farming and the other employed in manufacturing.

Ransom Parrish resided a few households away. We know about Ransom's interest in education which also implies that he and his brothers were educated themselves. A schoolhouse had been built in 1839-1840, and Ransom Parrish is found in a listing of trustees for that first school in Alden Township.[5]

Chapter Three

The Parrishs Go West

In his book William H. Canfield notes that the Parrish family came early to Baraboo, Sauk County, Wisconsin. The Parrish family had departed McHenry County, Illinois for Sauk County sometime between 1840 and 1850. The distance traveled was under 150 miles. Travel was by horse or wagon. Carriages were, as yet, unknown in this unsettled land renowned, even then, for its fertile soil and swarms of mosquitoes.

William H. Canfield best describes early Sauk County, Wisconsin in his book *Outline Sketches of Sauk County*. In 1842 he journeyed there and performed surveys that laid out townships. At other times he explored and made observations about the landscape, flora and fauna, later described in his books. He noted that the first man from the east to have made his way through the thickets and tall prairie grass to this land without roads was Abraham Wood.

Abe Wood, Eben Peck and others formed a settlement known today as Baraboo, first named Adams. Apparently Abe Wood was a notoriously rough and vulgar man whose large size and quarrelsome nature never failed to make a lasting impression. One incident involved Wood being incarcerated for attempting to shoot Henry A. Chapman, a land agent. Wood tore up the floor boards of the jail and tunneled his way to freedom.[6]

Canfield was sometimes accompanied on his many excursions by Count Agoston Haraszthy who established Sauk City.[7] The honorific is correct as Haraszthy was an aristocrat from Hungary who was often addressed as 'Colonel' in America. He had emigrated to America in 1840 bringing with him the then enormous sum of 150,000 dollars. With this capital he invested in several regional businesses including a store at Baraboo. Many of these investments resulted in defaults while others proved profitable. With the scarcity of money, it is highly likely that he invested or extended credit in the businesses established by the Parrish brothers. It is notable that Daniel Parish named his first son Charles Haraszthy Parrish, that appellation being the name of Agoston's father. Perhaps Daniel Parrish was granted a loan by Haraszthy to establish a business.

At Baraboo Daniel Parrish advertised his services as a daguerreotype artist, an early form of photography, and was warmly recommended in the local newspaper.[8] This occupation required an extensive array of equipment including an enclosed wagon with which to travel to his customers' residences. His father's occupation was a joiner, a specialty of carpentry. Brother Ransom is

listed as a carpenter. Brother Loomis owned a livery stable. Brother Caleb was listed as a musician. Lastly, Brother Nathan was also a musician. And, as later discussed, all the brothers appear to have been schooled in music. While the brothers possessed land at Baraboo, given their occupations as denoted in the 1850 federal census, they were not primarily farmers.

James K. Polk had been elected President with a platform of western expansion in 1845 and shortly thereafter prosecuted a war with Mexico that resulted in the acquisition of California by 1848. In the same year gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill, and the news launched the California Gold Rush . With this favorable news it wasn't long before Agoston Haraszthy left Wisconsin for San Diego, California in March 1849. He was going, not for gold mining, but for business opportunities. Known primarily for establishing the California wine industry, Haraszthy also became the assayer at the US Mint in San Francisco in August 1855. Like Haraszthy, the Parrish brothers left Baraboo for California seeking business opportunities in the spring of 1852.

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"Quite a number of our citizens have either already started, or are preparing to start for the land of 'gold' among whom are the Parish Band. We regret much to part with them, but if they must go we wish them a prosperous journey on the way to, and abundant success in their new home.[9]". The 'Parish Band' had made a start, perhaps a week before this newspaper article was published on 14 April 1852. Band is a curious term and could imply that the Parrish brothers had

performed at Baraboo for the entertainment of the residents. They were all musicians.

A six month journey from Madison, Wisconsin, or thereabouts, to California required planning and considerable gear and supplies[10]. Consider what it would take today to outfit an RV for a six month trip with few stops to resupply over difficult terrain. In those days you would need a wagon with a team of horses, feed, tools, horseshoes, extra harness, wagon repair parts, water barrel, cooking gear, non-perishable food, guns, and much more.

The exact route taken by Daniel is unknown, but from contemporary sources we can hazard an educated guess. From Madison, Wisconsin he may have traveled to Council Bluffs, Iowa and through the unsettled plains of western Iowa to Omaha, Nebraska.[11] Along with brothers Caleb and Nathan, he would have been traveling in a large company of wagons for safety knowing that the end of the Indian wars was decades away. Avoiding quicksand traps in streams to be crossed and pushing on through grasslands, often afire or lately burned, the wagon train eventually reached the California Trail or the Applegate-Lassen Trail, both running similarly. Sighting Chimney Rock meant that Fort Laramie was near and offered much needed supplies. After resupplying, the Platte River was crossed by ferry. Eventually, another landmark was sighted along the way: Independence Rock, a large granite rock towering 130 feet high. Countless emigrants left graffiti there. While the company of wagons may have started with

upwards to 50 persons, by this point perhaps less than 20 remained due to accident or disenchantment.

Continuing onward, the party reached the Humboldt River and departed the California Route. It was now mid-July or early August. Provisions were now low. The animals were weary and undernourished. And much that Daniel had brought for the trip had been discarded along the way. Descending onto a stretch of the Applegate-Lassen Trail until branching onto the Nobles Route, Daniel and his party reached Shasta, California in September 1852. He likely arrived with only the bare necessities.

Previous to the Parrish departure from Wisconsin for Shasta, California in April 1852, William Nobles had discovered a shortcut to Shasta through a pass from the Applegate-Lassen emigrant trail in 1851.[12] Nobles had been prospecting for gold with a number of other men in the Black Rock Desert area.[13] Alone, he had headed east from Honey Lake Valley to Black Rock Point and realized he had stumbled upon a route that would save wagon trains several days travel. Nobles convinced the business leaders of Shasta of the economic opportunity of diverting hundreds of travelers to the town of Shasta from the Applegate route which ended near (what is now) Grants Pass, Oregon. Accordingly they paid $2,000 to Nobles provided his report proved to be true.

To this end a group of men accompanied Nobles to survey the route for a wagon road to the town of Shasta. They left on 3 May 1852 and returned about the middle of June. Their findings were printed in Daily Alta California

newspaper 29 June 1852.[14] At Shasta, they reported that they were pleased with their survey and satisfied that Nobles had fulfilled his promises. The group had been gone six weeks.

Most histories record that during those six weeks, the Nobles party rested for eight days by the Humboldt River leaving five week's travel time.[15] The established story: While resting there a party of 22 men passed on their way to St. Louis, Missouri. With those men, William Nobles left the Shasta party to return to his home in Ohio. But this account is in error.

William Nobles could not have left in June 1852 if he had guided the Parrish wagon train to Shasta in September 1852, as reported in the newspaper. Additionally, Nobles would have returned to Shasta to collect the $2,000. Nobles must have returned to Ohio and then Minnesota in 1853 to lobby the legislature on the merits of his discovery.

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At Shasta the 20 arrivals from Wisconsin, by Nobles' route, were published in the Sacramento Daily Union newspaper on 7 September 1852.[16] Among the arrivals were Daniel Parrish and wife Harriett (nee Hartwell), Nathan Parrish and wife, Julie (nee Diggins), and Caleb Parrish and wife, Mary (nee Bow). Among the Wisconsin party of arrivals was also a Mr. _oble[17]. [Illegible]

Was the latter attribution referring to William Nobles? If so Nobles may have traveled with the 22 men eastward and met up with Daniel's party heading west. He may have struck a deal and led the Parrish wagon train to Shasta.

Another scenario: Nobles waited at the trailhead for wagon trains to divert to Shasta for a fee. In either case, the Wisconsin arrivals at Shasta may have been the first to benefit from Nobles Emigrant Trail. And, if so, the accounts of Nobles going to Minnesota in 1853 instead of 1852 make sense.

The ruins of the town, sometimes termed 'Old Shasta', are located just 15 minutes west of Redding, California. In the 1850's, Shasta was a thriving town and the key commercial center of northern California with about 3,500 residents. It was a major shipping point for mule trains and stagecoaches that serviced mining camps and settlements of the area. Within its confines, was built the Western Star Lodge No. 2, F. & A.M. (Freemasons)[18]. Their charter was brought across the plains with the Peter Lassen party of 1848, first to Benton City and then to Shasta on 9 May 1851. On 14 June 1853, fire broke out in Shasta and the entire business district was burned including the lodge. The business district was rebuilt with brick as a fire deterrent, but the inhabitants endured a second fire later. The town finally declined when the railroad company chose to stop at Redding, California.

Chapter Four

Early San Francisco

Daniel Parrish rested and resupplied at Shasta but soon left. There were multiple forms of transportation to San Francisco: steamship, stage or wagon. Daniel may have taken the easier route, and may have booked passage on a steamship on the Sacramento River, and disembarked at San Francisco bay. Several steamships plied the river in the early days of the gold rush including the *Sitka*, *Pioneer*, *Mint*, and *McKim*. These shallow drafted crafts made considerable money with passages costing upwards to $30 per passenger. The SS *Senator* was earning $60,000 per month, from passengers and cargo, after its arrival in October 1849.[19] That Daniel removed to San Francisco instead of remaining near the gold fields indicates that mining was not his primary interest.

Overland travel to California was not the only means of getting there for emigrants. A great number of adventurers came by ship. A voyage from the

East Coast around Cape Horn to San Francisco could take five months or more. There was a shorter route. One could sail to Panama, cross the isthmus by foot or horseback, and sail to California by steamship from the Pacific coast of Central America. One way or another, emigrants flocked to the city and the population of the city rose dramatically.

Daniel arrived, and it was still the 'early days' of the economic boom. San Francisco's population had grown from 6,000 in August 1849 to 15,000 in November 1849[20]. Since then thousands had poured in each month. As can be imagined, the infrastructure of the city must have groaned under the onslaught. Streets were unpaved and muddy. Some were corduroyed with logs, but sidewalks were almost non-existent. Daniel would have noticed that men tucked their pants into their boots to avoid the street mud. Women wore their dresses with raised hems.

San Francisco topography featured steep hills and a narrow shoreline.[21] As early as 1847, efforts were made to move fill into the bay to widen the shoreline and make room for development. Eventually, with the use of a steam excavator, soil was removed from the hill and dropped into the bay allowing for two blocks of expansion for building. The summit of the hills became desirable in the 1870's when they became accessible. Before that Nob Hill had been a desolate, sandy, windblown desert with stunted trees.

In 1852, on the year of Parrish's arrival, there were already about 160 hotels, but that number counted tent and shack affairs as well as luxury and

ordinary hotels. Along the bay Daniel found that people congregated in groups that shared some identity, be it ethnic, geographic, occupational, or other. Parrish saw innumerable clubs and organizations such as societies of pioneers and the Free Masons. Amongst this populous, Daniel Parrish looked around for opportunities in the area known as the Barbary Coast.

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The Barbary Coast was bounded, roughly, from Broadway on the north, Clay and Commercial on the south, Grant Avenue and Chinatown on the west, and the Embarcadero on the east. Within these informal boundaries was Portsmouth Square[22]. It was formerly known as The Plaza, served as the heart of the action and the scene of many historic events. On the south side, ships arriving in 1848 and 1849 were often abandoned by their crews who fled to the gold fields. Left unattended, the derelict ships became makeshift warehouses and even served as lodgings in a city where hotels were scarce.

The gambling houses, dance halls and taverns were a magnet for miners who had toiled to extract gold from the American River and other locations. The denizens of the Barbary Coast eagerly plied their various tactics to extract that gold from the miners. It was called ‘mining the miners’. Not all these denizens were men. Women also shared in various enterprises. Mother Bronson, a large muscular woman, did not need the aid of spiked drinks or cudgels. She could

shanghai a prospective sailor singlehanded. A Miss Piggott of Davis Street employed the usual implements of the crimping trade to shanghai hapless souls.

Another money-making pursuit for Barbary Coast women was prostitution[23]. In the early days of the gold rush era, women were so scarce that just seeing one would often draw a crowd. Seeing a child was more amazing. Just to sit and talk with the fairer sex for a fee cost a goodly amount. To have a dance cost a great deal. To spend the night? Well, not everyone had that kind of money. As the years passed pimps paid the passage for hundreds of girls[24]. Chinese, South American and even French girls were imported from the streets and often forced into the trade. The usual venues of employment were the tent cities that spread across the Barbary Coast. But there were also more sophisticated establishments.

There was a two story building on Washington Street across from the Portsmouth Square. The Parisian Mansion on Commercial Street was a cut above. And as French girls were highly sought after - perhaps perceived as exotic - a few were able to retire to France never to toil again. A man would be greeted at the door by a maid and taken to the Madam who introduced him to the ladies who wore fine evening dresses. Albert Benard de Russailh, a frenchman himself, even wrote a diary of 1851 in which he described the cost of things in San Francisco including the prices for “women of easy virtue”[25].

A few madams, such as the notorious Kate Hastings, prospered to such a degree that they employed liveried servants to follow their carriages in the

streets. Another well known and notorious madam, a Mrs. Keenan, was shipwrecked on the steamship *Brother Jonathan*.

As with all boom towns, less reputable elements prospered. Many of these were there to relieve the miners of their gold. The Barbary Coast was notorious for its gangs, thieves, pimps, whores, and all manner of criminals. Among the criminals were the crimps who kidnapped men to fill ships with new crews, since many of the former crews had deserted to seek their fortunes in the gold fields.

One notorious gang almost wrested control of the city from the city government. They were known as the Sydney Ducks, although they referred to themselves as 'Colonials'.[26] Released or escaped from Australia, they streamed into San Francisco between 1849 and 1850. They quickly formed into several gangs and pursued loosely organized crime within the Barbary Coast. The robbery and assault on Charles J. Jansen in 1851 promptly initiated a series of articles in the city's newspapers that inflamed the populous. Mobs formed. Finally the Committee of Vigilance was formed to restore peace to the city, headed by some of the city's leading men. The Committee and their militia hanged 4 people and forced dozens from the city but was disbanded in September 1851 only to be reconstituted in 1856.

One such hanging was of one John Jenkins, a purported Sydney Duck. Captured after he was accused of stealing an iron safe from a shipping office on Central Wharf. Jenkins was hastily 'tried' by the Committee of Vigilance and taken to Portsmouth Square. On his way, Jenkins smoked a cigar, and upon

arrival maintained his innocence and asked to be shot instead of hanged. Afterwards the people of San Francisco were divided over the actions that had been taken. An inquest was held and concluded Jenkins died as a result of a "pre-concerted action of an association of citizens styling themselves a Committee of Vigilance."[27] No indictments were made.

In summary, San Francisco, in those days, was an industrious but dangerous city with the Barbary Coast being the center of the more infamous and violent events. Contemporary sources disclose little about how Daniel Parrish was able to navigate this cesspool, a far cry from the sleepy town of Baraboo. But navigate it, he did. There are no reports of his being victimized other than a small theft. Thus, he was undoubtedly not viewed, in appearance or manner, as an 'easy mark' or 'soft touch'. And it was generally acknowledged that he was reputable and well known prior to the *Brother Jonathan* shipwreck.

Chapter Five

Daniel Becomes a Hotelier

Daniel Parrish owned or leased several hotels during his residence in San Francisco. All of the following hotels were located in the heart of the Barbary Coast. Among these were the Niantic Hotel (1853) located at Clay and Sansome. Daniel and his brother Caleb operated the Chicago Hotel (1854). It was on Jackson Street, between Davis and Front. The Crescent City Hotel (1855) was near the Niantic on Sansome Street between Clay and Commercial. The Parrish Hotel (1856) was situated at Battery and Commercial. The Portsmouth House (aka Plaza Hotel) (1857 - 1858 and perhaps operated longer) was on Clay at the corner of Brenham Street. Parrish was the proprietor of a second Chicago Hotel (1862 - 1863) on Pacific Street between Battery and Front.

Each hotel he operated was an improvement from the last, becoming more and more substantial and refined. In San Francisco's early days, hotels and boarding houses ranged from tent affairs and ramshackle shacks to more substantial buildings. Low-end hotels resembled barracks that housed eight or more persons in bunks or hammocks. Middling hotels were a step up and offered a dining room, private bedrooms in addition to shared bedrooms, stables and other comforts. Frank Soulé, co-editor and co-owner with James Nisbet of the Evening Bulletin newspaper, wrote in *The Annals of San Francisco* that the Niantic, Crescent, Portsmouth hotels were "ordinary hotels"[28], not grand but not inferior hotels. Eventually grand hotels would be built at a cost of millions and resembled palaces.

To be a successful hotelier, in those days, required a substantial list of qualities and skills. Those qualities give us a glimpse into the character of Daniel Parrish. First, he must have had the interpersonal skills required to cater to an array of guests, from wealthy businessmen and government officials to miners, sailors, and laborers. Those skills involved resolving complaints and issues as well as servicing special requests.

In a competitive city like San Francisco, a hotel's reputation was crucial to its success, so the hotelier had to be a skilled marketer and public relations manager, ensuring positive guest experiences to generate repeat business. Advertisements in the city's newspapers, such as the Daily Alta California, were essential. And, with new hotels opening on a regular basis, Parrish had to work

hard to maintain a competitive edge, often by offering better service, better amenities, and a better reputation.

Some guests were transient, but most resided full time, especially merchants and professionals who advertised the hotel's location in the local newspapers as the address for contact. Parrish's hotels also sponsored special events such as elections and marriages which enhanced the hotel's reputation. One such marriage was performed at the Parrish Hotel: “At Parrish’s Hotel, in this city, May 2d (1856), by Reverend James H Bristow, George Fleming of Alameda County, to Miss Mary Murphy…late of Philadelphia, Pa.”[29]

To provide all the necessary services, he employed front desk clerks, chambermaids, cooks, waiters, porters, and stablemen. Especially important were the 'runners' who met the incoming ship's passengers and promised incomparable lodging. Eventually, the city would require 'runners' to be licensed due to past, frequent defrauding of passengers. His stage coaches brought, for a fee, baggage and guests to the hotel. Possibly he hired laborers to carry baggage from the wharves.

The potential, financial rewards for a hotelier during the California Gold Rush were incredible, but there were incredible, financial risks as well. Many lodging concerns made annual incomes in excess of $10,000. $10,000 in today's money approximates $420,000. However, expenses were just as high. And in a climate of boom or bust, Daniel Parrish had to successfully navigate the rapidly shifting economics of the city.

Before his arrival and near the end of 1849, 600 ships had been abandoned in the harbor. Crews deserted the ships for the gold fields that were yet a great distance away. A whole new industry arose. Known as 'shipbreaking', salvage efforts continued for more than a decade.[30]

One such derelict ship within the Barbary Coast was the *Niantic* that had burned down to a charred hull in early May 1851 near Leidesdorff's Wharf.

Willam A. Leidesdorff was the son of a Danish-Jewish father and a Creole, mixed-race, mother who had previously been enslaved.[31] Before his untimely death in 1848, Leidesdorff had accumulated a vast fortune and had been prominent in the city's civic affairs. He may possibly have been the first black millionaire. Upon his death, "All places of business and entertainment were closed on the occasion, the flags at the barracks and of the vessels in port hung at halfmast during the day ; while minute guns were fired as the burial train moved on towards the Mission Dolores, in the churchyard of which place the body was interred."[32] Through connivance Joseph Folsom obtained much of Leidesdorff's estate and became the wealthiest man in California before his death in 1855. Folsom Prison is named after him.

The steamship *Niantic* had arrived at the harbor on the fifth of July 1849 and was soon abandoned by its crew. Months passed, and the consignees, Cook, Baker and Co., sold it to new owners who arranged to haul the hulk up to the corner of Clay Street and Sansome Street where it was used as a storeship (warehouse). Leased by L. H. Roby, the *Niantic* was reconstituted as a hotel and

was known as one of the finest hotel in the city at the time. The lease was later sold to a Mr. Johnson who later sold it to Daniel Parrish in 1853. Before selling the lease, Johnson advertised the Niantic Hotel as having 39 bedchambers and a much enlarged dining room.[33]

The first excavation of the Niantic Hotel occurred in 1872. 35 baskets of champagne were found after the cellars were dug out of mud some eight or more feet deep.[34] The wine was Jacquesson Fils, a dry french wine probably stored there by a merchant. In 1978 during excavation for the Mark Twain Plaza Complex next to the Transamerica Pyramid, now about six blocks from the waterfront, remains of the Niantic Hotel were found again.

While Daniel was the proprietor of the Niantic Hotel in 1853, a boarder at the hotel stole a great deal of money but was caught, convicted and sentenced to several years in state prison.[35] It was thought that the money was hidden somewhere about the hotel. A search was conducted. However, the money was never found. P. T. Woods was clerking for Parrish at the time, and he soon bought the Niantic Hotel lease from his employer. Woods operated the hotel for some time and had a thriving business before leaving San Francisco. It was rumored that Woods left for parts unknown with more money than he had made from rents. In another case, on August 23, 1859, John Kennedy was convicted of stealing a number of items from a boy employed by Daniel Parrish. He was sentenced to 60 days in jail.

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While the hotel business was highly lucrative, compared to those in cities outside of California, there were hazards that any hotel proprietor encountered. Those hazards included theft, assault, fire, suicides and insolvency.

With most buildings constructed of wood, fire was a clear and present danger. A great many fires ravaged San Francisco prior to Daniel Parrish's arrival. The first notable fire destroyed the Shades Hotel in 1849 and the ship *Philadelphia* just months later. In 1850 two fires caused millions of dollars of damage. The great fire of 1851 started in a paint and upholstery store on the south side of the Plaza, later known as Portsmouth Square. Wind swept the fire several blocks down Kearney Street and then south to the business district. Ordinances were passed to help mitigate the frequent fires without effect. Fires continued to wreak havoc for many years.

Some of the events that Daniel Parrish encountered follow:

About 6 o'clock 11 July 1854, the city hall bell rung out the alarm of fire. “All the houses on the block bounded by Front. Washington, Jackson and Davis streets are leveled to the ground, nothing remaining but the blackened foundations whereon they stood.”[36] Chicago House (Hotel), on Jackson Street, owned by Daniel Parrish, Caleb Parrish, and Billinghurst was lost, $16,000 damages.

"A bold theft was committed on Christmas afternoon, under the following circumstances: a young man named Hastings, connected with J C Hastings stationery establishment, having occasion to go into Parrish's Hotel, on Battery Street, for a few moments, hitched his horse to a post on the sidewalk. He was gone about 15 minutes, and when he returned he found his horse missing. On Saturday last the horse returned to his stable, minus the bridle and a very valuable saddle."[37]

"About 3 o'clock this morning (21 Jan 1862), a man named Edward Perkins, a drayman, went into the Portsmouth House (Hotel) and created a disturbance, beating the proprietor of the House and endeavored to stick an umbrella down his throat, injuring his palate greatly. He afterwards knocked down two officers and kicked them badly ; he was finally overpowered and taken to the station house. Judge Cowles will give him a chance to repent of his sins in a secluded locality."[38] The proprietor is unlikely to have been Daniel Parrish as he was operating the Chicago Hotel at this time.

Two years later, on 18 Dec 1863, a young man named Conrad Droth, alias George Fisher, lodged at the Chicago Hotel and had been partying with friends. Upon his return to the hotel, Herman Droste, proprietor, remarked: "You stayed out late tonight.". Droth replied: "Yes". He then went up to his room and shot himself in the head.[39] The inquest confirmed the death a suicide. Daniel Parrish and Herman Droste were in partnership to operate the Chicago Hotel. Herman

Droste was a member of the Odd Fellows, died 1876, was buried in the Odd Fellows Cemetery, but was later removed to Greenlawn Memorial Park at Colma.

Daniel resided at 194 Sacramento Street where a burglar entered his house on February 28th at 2 am in the morning. Daniel awoke to the noise but the thieves had escaped taking a gold watch and $50.

Daniel Parrish witnessed a shooting while sweeping the front of the Portsmouth Hotel at about 5 a.m. on 5 July 1857.[40] A Mr. J.C.B. Stanley deposed: "I knew Mr. Gordon, I know Mr. Corse ; on the morning of the 5th of July I got up about five o'clock, as usual, and was going over to the Sazerac to get a drink, when I saw a party at the door and heard a noise ; they appeared to be drunk, and I did not wish to go among them ; so I went to the Portsmouth House, Mr. Parrish was there; I remained about twenty minutes…".[41]

The Evening Bulletin on 18 Jan 1862 reported that the proprietor of the Chicago Hotel (Parrish) ordered his stage driver to dump the belongings of victims of the Sacramento flood into the mud at the wharf. On 20 January 1862, the Evening Bulletin retracted its report noting that Parrish had worked tirelessly to transport the sufferers to the assembly hall and often housed them without charge.[42] Perhaps a competitor made the false report? Competition was fierce.

Despite the dangers, there emerges a portrait of Daniel Parrish as an affable, intelligent, and skilled entrepreneur who maintained good relations with his counterparts, was respected, and became well known within the city.

Chapter Six

Madame Pique, Cultural Pioneer of San Francisco

Early San Francisco did not just abound in drunkenness, prostitution, gambling, and crime. There was also a thirst for cultural events. A majority of San Francisco's inhabitants were upwardly mobile and desired the benefits of more refined circumstances. Cultural events also gave them a sense of connection.

By the mid-1850's, San Francisco's middle class had grown considerably. Wishing to be accepted by 'good society', they needed to learn the social rules and etiquette necessary to that end. Lectures, plays, concerts, and dancing venues were excellent forums to study those rules and etiquette. These venues were held at the assembly hall where, in addition to entertainment, town meetings and political events were also held. Dances styles like the waltz and polka were particularly popular, and the dancing craze reached its zenith at this time.

In contrast to the disreputable dance halls and concert saloons of the Barbary Coast, a dancing hall, catering to the upwardly mobile social ranks, was established at the northwest corner of Kearny and Post in 1853 by Harry Meiggs[43]. The capitalist, Meiggs, had brought Edward Pique and his wife Frances (Weller) Pique to San Francisco from Philadelphia to enhance this business enterprise. Edward was a composer and instrumentalist while Frances was a dance instructor who hosted immensely popular soirées.

Edward and Frances Pique brought refinement to San Francisco's residents by lending elegance to dance styles and hosting sophisticated musical performances. Frances's soirées were not just social events; they were occasions where grace and poise were celebrated. With her expert instruction, attendees learned to navigate the complex movements of popular dances with confidence, while the live music Edward selected enhanced the overall atmosphere. Through their efforts, they elevated the cultural landscape of the city, transforming gatherings into sophisticated affairs that reflected the aspirations and tastes of a growing urban population.

By March 1855, the Daily Alta California announced a large new venue had been built near Meiggs' Hall by W. H. Whitmore to better accommodate the now famous Pique soirées, performances, and dance instruction.[44] The capitalist Whitmore was well known for real estate development and his contributions to the city. The new venue was termed a dance hall but functioned for other gatherings as well. The main entrance was on Kearny Street where guests were

admitted into a gallery forty feet long. The gallery led to the lobby lit from above by a stained glass skylight. Off the lobby, stairs led to the dining room, dressing rooms and dance academy. Through double doors, from the lobby, one entered the main hall lit by gas fired chandeliers and twelve foot windows. In all, the main hall encompassed 4,800 square feet, ornamented in the gothic style, that could accommodate hundreds.

Of course there were competing establishments for upscale entertainment. Adelphi Theatre was located between Washington and Clay. The American Theatre was on Sansome between California and Sacramento. On Washington near Montgomery was Maguire's Opera House.

As Frances Pique became well known and something of a celebrity, the public began to refer to her as 'Madame Pique'. The pseudonym, Madame Pique, refers to an operetta, La dame de pique (1850) by Fromental Halévy. The operetta was based upon a short story by Alexander Pushkin entitled "The Queen of Spades" (Russian:). The plot concerns greed and vengeance around a card game where the queen of spades (alias: Madame Pique) is the losing card. Apparently the allusion appealed to a risk-taking public who likely viewed life as a risky game. In any event, Frances was universally known as 'Madame Pique'.

She was born in England about 1816, the daughter of Charles Weller. She married Edward Pique at Philadelphia where she was enumerated in the 1850 federal census. The couple came to San Francisco in 1852 shortly before the

arrival of Daniel Parrish, and they became acquainted with each other later. It was not long before we find Daniel Parrish on the committee to produce the Madame Pique's grand opening ball at the new venue in April 1855. The committee was responsible for planning, coordination, budgeting, program development, procurement, and more. Parrish acted as master of ceremonies and was likely an investor. The advertisement for the ball prominently noted that “No lady will be admitted without her invitation card”; suggesting: no women of ill repute will be admitted.

As mentioned before, Madame Pique was acquainted with Daniel Parrish due to his involvement in launching the grand opening ball. On 22 March 1856, the Daily Alta California reported that “Our worthy townsman Mr. Parish, and his accomplished lady, formerly of the Niantic, San Francisco, have opened a dancing academy, and thus far have been well patronized. Mr. P. being a good musician, is always on hand at any balls or parties which may take place in this will-be city.”[45]

Madam Pique employed dance instructors including two men, one of whom may have been Daniel's brother Caleb Parrish who opened dancing schools much later in Oregon.[46] Since all the Parrish brothers were musicians, it is reasonable to assume that they participated in the orchestras. There is an advertisement in the Times Gazette, 17 December 1859, announcing a grand ball in Redwood City. The Caleb Parrish’s Cotillion Band was engaged for the occasion.[47]

Madam Pique continued to open and operate dancing schools at various locales into the late 1870's. The numerous accounts of Frances Pique suggests that she was a vivacious, intelligent and talented woman who should be remembered as a prominent pioneer of San Francisco.

Chapter Seven

The Economic Panic of 1857

As if it were a foreshadowing of the SS *Brother Jonathan* shipwreck, the SS *Central America* was caught in a hurricane off the coast of the Carolinas and sank on 9 September 1857. The steamship was carrying 10 short tons of gold from the San Francisco mint to New York City. In an era when most countries tied the value of their currency to a fixed amount of gold, the event sent shudders through the financial markets.

Just weeks before, the New York branch of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company failed on August 24, 1857[48]. It was reported that the entire capital of the Trust's home office had been embezzled. Depositors began withdrawing their funds from banks. Investors began withdrawing capital, particularly from railroad bonds at a loss. The public's loss of confidence led to runs on banks, many of which closed. Surviving banks severely tightened

lending terms and called in loans. A national panic ensued as over a dozen, large New York banks closed operations by mid-October. Other banks in major cities followed.

Just as dominoes fall in a row when the first is tipped over, business's failed and unemployment soared. Agricultural crops piled up on shipping docks because of scarce money and tight credit. Livestock shipments suffered the same fate. Food scarcity ensued particularly in the east. And, as to causes? The only thing scholars can agree upon is that there were a multitude of factors.

In 1857, the news from the east took weeks, by ship, to reach California. The telegraph did not connect to San Francisco until 1861. When the news did arrive, all at once the stock values of the gold mine companies, which had been valued far above their real value, fell drastically. Thousands of investors were ruined. As in the east, California banks tightened credit terms and called in loans. This economic landscape lasted into 1859 and, by some accounts, into 1861.

The economic boom in California was winding down prior to the Panic of 1857. By 1855, gold, in and around stream beds, had dwindled. The simple mining techniques of panning and rockers gave way to hard-rock and hydraulic mining. Gold still flowed into the banking system, but the yield had slowed, and the days of easy money had come to an end. With this change, the required investment in equipment to improve the yield led to the formation of mining

companies. And yet, for 10 years between $50 and $60 million flowed into the world economy each year from San Francisco.

In 1863 people were still investing in mining efforts. Nathan and Caleb Parrish were listed as trustees in the Bigfoot Mining Company in November of that year.[49] Gold extraction continued but at a greater cost. Then in November 1863: “All at once the stocks of the good mines went down from far above their real value to as much below…”[50]

At the Portsmouth Hotel on Clay and Brenham Streets, Daniel Parrish, proprietor, was doing a thriving business. The hotel was a substantial building and was, perhaps, the finest of all the hotels he had operated. Yet by 14 December 1857, he found himself in the 12th District Court having availed himself of the Insolvency Act and was discharged from his debts.[51] The following July his assets were sold by the sheriff. His liabilities amounted to $4,940, while his assets were listed as $500.

Down but not out, Daniel worked at his brother Nathan's Pioneer Pail and Tub Manufactory while still lodging at the Portsmouth Hotel. All the Parrish brothers worked there at one time or another, and it is believed they all had a financial interest in the company. In January 1859, Daniel and Caleb Parrish demonstrated the manufacturing process for a reporter of the *California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences* newspaper (14 January 1859). They wrote “We were kindly presented with a sample of their work, and we do not hesitate to

pronounce that sample, and what we saw at the factory, to be fully equal to the best ever made".

In 1862 Daniel returned to his occupation as hotelier. He was the proprietor of a hotel, also named Chicago Hotel, on Pacific Street for a year or more. It appears, however, that the venture soon ended. The auction of the hotel's furniture was advertised on August 7, 1863[52]. 1863 was a particularly bad year for hoteliers. In 1862 there were 444 establishments, but by the end of 1863, the number had fallen to 217[53]. Parrish sold his interest in the Chicago Hotel to Herman Droste.

Daniel resided at his home on Clara Street and still had funds enough to own a house at Geary and Gough Streets which he offered for rent in 1864. "A Fine House - A Pleasant and Healthy Location…containing Thirteen Rooms, newly finished, with Stable, Carriage House, and a good well of water attached. To a good tenant, will be rented for one year at $35 per month. Inquire of D. PARRISH on the premises."[54]

It appears that he embarked on a career as a shipping agent at this time. A newspaper reported, in the shipping news column, that he arrived at San Francisco on board the clipper ship, *Golden City* having sailed to Acapulco in April 1865[55]. He departed for Panama on board the SS *Constitution* on June 17, 1865[56]. The ship was under the command of Captain Watkins of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. And he is listed as a shipping consignee for the H Levi & Co.[57] on the SS *Brother Jonathan* arriving on 29 June 1865 at San Francisco at 7

p.m., having passed the steamer Sierra Nevada on her way to port.[58] As shipping consignee he was to be the recipient of the shipment and was responsible for ensuring the goods are delivered as specified.

As a shipping agent, he was responsible for the making of freight rates; of the issue and distribution of tariffs or rate cards or instructions as to what charges are in effect; of the solicitation and development of freight traffic and the booking of cargoes; the issue of freight contracts, bills of lading, parcel receipts, shipping permits, arrival notices and other shipping documents; and of the entry and clearance of vessels.

Taking such a position exposed him to potential hazards beyond those he had encountered on the Barbary Coast of San Francisco. As a shipping agent or shipping consignee, he would make many voyages by sea. With each trip he risked shipwreck.

The Panama Route, which Parrish frequented, ran from New York or New Orleans to Panama City, then by train across the Isthmus of Panama, and by steamship to California. It took about a 30 day's journey. Most of the heavy cargo came by way of this route from 1848 until 1869, and it was the fastest route until the Transcontinental Railroad was completed in 1869.

Many ships litter the seas between Panama and California. They were lost due to boiler explosions, storms, fire, and from running aground. The safety of passengers and crew could be further jeopardized by a lack of lifeboats. A criticism of this safety issue was printed in the Daily Evening Bulletin on 23

January 1864 wherein was written: “The *America* carries a total of six boats, two of which can carry 15 persons each, while the remaining four boats would be well filled with 25 persons each”[59]. The point being made was: the boats could save 130 people while, during the last voyage, there were 893 passengers besides the crew.

Chapter Eight

SS Brother Jonathan's Last Voyage

The SS *Brother Jonathan* left San Francisco on the afternoon of the 28th of July 1865. She was delayed due to being grounded in the mud. Captain DeWolf objected to the overloading of the vessel by the shipping agent who threatened to replace the captain if he would not take the steamer out to sea. Before departure, DeWolf took the opportunity to relate to a friend the exchange with the shipping agent as well as his concern over cargo weight. DeWolf took the steamer out to sea with perhaps only 6 to 10 feet of freeboard above the water.

The weather that day began sunny and mild with a light breeze as the steamer plied its way north. Soon, however, foul weather set in from the north, northwest. While the ship was capable of steaming 13 knots per hour in calmer weather, she struggled against the wind. Headway became a slow progress.

After some 30 hours, the ship put in at Crescent City very early in the morning of the 30th of July. Having discharged business there, Captain DeWolf put to sea again. It was between 9 and 10 a.m., and he was heading into heavy weather.

Seaman Jacob Yates: “On Sunday, when I took the wheel at 12 o'clock p.m., it was blowing a heavy gale from the northwest, and we were four miles above Point St. George. The sea was running mountains high, and the ship was not making any headway. Capt. DeWolf thought it proper to turn back, run into Crescent City, and wait until the storm ceased. He ordered me to put the helm hard a port, which I did, and then he told me to steady her. I did so. Her course was then due east. The time about a quarter to 1 P.M. I kept her that course until we made the Seal Rock, and then the Captain ordered me to keep her southeast by south. It was clear where we were, but foggy and smoky in shore. Then we run along until 10 minutes of 2 P.M., when she struck the unknown sunken rock...”.[60]

In the main public room, known as the saloon, Daniel Parrish would have peered out to see 10 to 30 foot waves crash across the deck of the heavily laden ship. The skies, dark and eerie, had dimmed to near twilight with streaming, low clouds forming a dark, rolling mass that curled and shifted.

Passengers were sheltering, or seasick below, from the raging squall. Mrs. Altrie of Albany, Oregon said later that near 12:30 pm, thirty minutes after the noon ship's bell had rung out announcing the mid-day meal for the

passengers, the Brother Jonathan shuddered and reeled as it smashed into a half submerged, jagged rock. As the rock ripped into the vessel, Parrish would have heard a deep, resounding boom accompanied by the sharp, splintering report of the pierced hull.

Within minutes Captain DeWolf ordered the lowering of one of the four iron lifeboats. The first mate, W. H. Allen, loaded fifty passengers, including Mrs. General Wright, and lowered the craft away. But the careening ship, under the onslaught of heavy seas, capsized the boat throwing all aboard into the water. A second lifeboat, filled with women, was lowered under the supervision of the second mate, J. D. Campbell. But it too capsized.

Having secured a cork lifejacket, Parrish would have watched from the deck as the third mate, J. Patterson, boarded five women and three children onto a smaller surfboat. Not more than fifteen or twenty minutes had elapsed, and desperation was now setting in. Ten crew leapt onto the crowded, wooden surfboat including two wheelmen, a steward, and two firemen.

After some difficulty in clearing the ship, the men in the surfboat pulled on the oars straining to reach safety beyond the doomed steamship. From the surfboat, Mrs. Mary Altrie of Albany, Oregon saw a distress signal fired from the wreck. She recounted that the little boat threaded its way through bodies, both alive and dead, in the water with crewmen both bailing water and pulling at the oars. After a mere 45 minutes, the once proud steamship was gone.

Those nineteen were the only survivors of over 230 passengers and crew who, under better circumstances, could have been saved in the four Francis' Patent Iron Lifeboats and two wooden surfboats that accommodated a total capacity of 250 people. The survivors are reported to have seen Captain DeWolf, General Wright, Mr. Lord, and Mr. Nisbet on deck as the steamship finally sank beneath the waves minutes later. Nisbet, in those last minutes, took the time to write a will and pen it to his clothing. Daniel Parrish was probably alongside them but was not as recognizable as those prominent men.

At about 4 pm the surfboat and the fortunate nineteen arrived at Crescent City. Ben West spotted the boat through a telescope as it rounded Battery Point and approached the wharf. Benjamin West was a saloon keeper who had come west from his birthplace of Massachusetts.

One of the 19 survivors was a fortunate young lady who was on deck at the time of the disaster. "Martha Elizabeth Wilder, a girl of about sixteen years of age, whose mother resided on Berry Street, San Francisco, states that she was engaged by Mrs. Keenan as nurse, and did not know that she was really intended for a waiter girl in a saloon until on the way up"[61]. "When the ship struck (the rock) she saw Beldon on deck. He went and got a life preserver and offered it to a young lady standing near by, who refused to accept it; she said he then came up and wanted her to put it on, which she would not do. She was then thrown into the life-boat and saved."[62]

Roseanna Keenan, the notorious madam, had booked passage, on the *Brother Jonathan*, to Victoria, Canada where she kept a lager beer saloon along with her husband John C. Keenan[63]. John C. Keenan was notorious himself as is demonstrated by a gunfight in 1858 when John Keenan and John Black first engaged in a fist fight and then drew pistols and fired “promiscuously”[64]. They missed each other but wounded a bystander, Mr. Montague .

Mrs. Keenan's party included seven ladies who were employed to be “serving waiters”[65]. According to contemporary statements, Roseanna Keenan was sea-sick in her berth, below decks, aboard the steamship. During the shipwreck, she was seen struggling in the water with two life preservers tied to her. She was struck by a plank and stunned. Six of the seven ladies were below, sea-sick, and never came up on deck.

Rescue boats were launched and proceeded as far out as they could go, but they were beaten back by the storm. Another attempt was made on 31 July 1865 by Benjamin West and Anson Burr in separate boats but also without success. On the first of August, some Kanakas (Pacific Islanders) were out at sea and believed they saw people on Seal Rock, but they could not get to them. With this report boats went out against strong winds only to discover sea lions at Seal Rock.

Captain N. C. Brooks, of the barque *Cambridge*, searched the shipwreck site in vain for his wife, child and sister in early August. “The Cambridge reports having sailed twice round the spot where the vessel is supposed to have been

lost"[66]. On the 6th of August, Captain Johnston of the SS *Del Norte* arrived at Crescent City from San Francisco. On board were the husbands, wives, fathers, and mothers of the *Brother Jonathan* passengers. They had come seeking news of their loved ones. Upon the *Del Norte's* arrival, a boat came alongside carrying Joe Wall, of Wells Fargo[67]. He related that no persons, alive or dead, had yet been recovered.

Not later than August 9th, the body of Daniel Parrish was recovered at sea near Crescent City along with a Mr. Leach, E. Ilonate, O. W. Pollock, G. Church, and many others. These early recoveries were made possible because those recovered bodies wore life preservers. In the weeks that followed, bodies washed ashore as far away as Gold Bluffs and Trinidad[68]. Many, but not all, of these deceased were buried at locations along the coast. Those bodies nearer Crescent City were brought to the coroner, J. E. Eldridge. He identified or, if unidentified, numbered them and recorded their appearance and possessions. "Sight recognition in the 19th century was relatively simple: the body was laid out so that victims' families, friends, neighbors, or acquaintances could look for familiar features of the face or body; they might also recognize personal effects located with the remains."[69]. The bodies were eventually buried in the city burial grounds or transported by their families to family plots far from Crescent City.

Chapter Nine

Aftermath - Burial and Controversy

As noted, Daniel Parrish was wearing a cork life preserver and was found at sea by volunteer search boats. The coroner documented a description of Parrish and listed the items about his clothing that could identify him. Later, the bodies of James Nisbet[70], George W. Pollack, and Daniel Parrish were taken in charge by Mr. Knower[71]. He was a San Francisco policeman who recognized these men. He had instructions from San Francisco. Those instructions must have come from a person or persons with political influence. At considerable expense, Mr. Knower obtained metallic coffins suitable for the transport of the bodies to San Francisco aboard the SS *Del Norte*, arriving August 26th[72].

What was the commonality amongst these men that prompted a police officer - with instructions from San Francisco - to recover and transport their bodies at considerable expense? It is an enduring mystery. Mr. Nisbet[73] was

the editor and part owner in the San Francisco Bulletin. He had arrived in San Francisco in November 1852, worked at newspapers, and eventually became an owner and editor. Mr. Pollack was the owner of a book and stationery store on Market Street. He received Masonic rites at his funeral.

The funeral of Daniel Parrish took place at his residence on Clara street at 2 pm Sunday, 27 August 1865. Methodist Reverend Peck officiated. His burial was at Lone Mountain Cemetery, Tier 10 Grave 2 North Ridge[74]. In 1854, the city had set aside 160 acres for Lone Mountain Cemetery. The cemetery was situated between the Mission and the Presidio. It was enclosed and featured “spacious carriageways” and “with walks threading the mazes of native shrubbery”[75].

A legal battle over the administration of Lone Mountain Cemetery occurred in the late 1860's. And as a result, the area was incorporated, and the cemetery was renamed Laurel Hill Cemetery. By the late 1880's the cemetery was suffering from neglect, and developers were eyeing the property for housing and shops. The Richmond Banner Newspaper advocated the removal of the graves to Colma in present day San Mateo County. Religious organizations and others were against the removal. Litigation prevented the removal for years. Finally a majority of the graves were removed to Cypress Lawn Memorial Cemetery, Colma, San Mateo, California between 1940 and 1945. Many of the graves had been previously transported to family plots earlier by family members.

The story of Daniel Parrish did not end with his burial. After the *Brother Jonathan* tragedy, his wife, Harriet Hartwell Parrish, descended into clinical depression and paranoia. It was believed that the death of Daniel Parrish and the death of her youngest son just months after the shipwreck was the reason. Two year old Frank Daniel Parrish died on 10 December 1865 and was buried the next day.[76] Funeral arrangements were conducted by N. Gray & Co.

The 1865 city directory, published after the shipwreck, lists Harriet as a widow dwelling on Clara Street, San Francisco earning money by renting rooms and washing. By 1867 she was committed on the 8th of April by Judge H.B. Underhill in San Joaquin County to the state hospital in Stockton. Her medical record reads: “She believes the spirits of the departed are about her and talking to her – that the masonic and other orders are persecuting her – that they drove her out of San Francisco – is melancholy and silent; is said to have secreted a knife under her pillow. She struck her brother, Horace French Hartwell[77], without apparent cause....Cause of insanity Spiritualism and probably the loss of her husband on the *Brother Jonathan* and children…”.[78] Both the 1880 and 1900 federal censuses locate Harriet in the state hospital.

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Controversy continued for years after the shipwreck with regard to the cause of the disaster. Mrs. DeWolf, widow of Captain DeWolf, believed the sinking was due to the *Falkenburg* collision together with the overloading of the vessel. Before the ship's departure from San Francisco, Captain DeWolf had told the

shipping agent to stop loading cargo as the ship was already sitting low in the water. The shipping agent refused him, saying: that if DeWolf would not take the ship out, then he would find a captain who would take the ship out. The shipping agent then ordered an ore crusher, weighing many tons, loaded above the *Falkenburg* collision repairs to the ship's hull. With the additional load, the ship became mired in the mud and had to wait until high tide to depart.

If given to superstition, one would maintain that other factors in the history of the SS *Brother Jonathan* foreshadowed the shipwreck. The side-wheeler, steamer *Brother Jonathan* was launched 2 November 1850. Cornelius Vanderbilt bought it in 1852 and refitted her with a third deck[79]. It increased the passenger capacity but also made the ship top-heavy. As any shipbuilder will tell you, the added deck made the ship susceptible to rolling over in heavy seas. In 1856 Vanderbilt sold the steamer to Captain John T. Wright who renamed her *Commodore*[80]. The renaming may have been a strategy to improve the ship's reputation in the various ports of call.

Amongst seamen, it has always been the belief that renaming a ship tempts bad luck. Sailors often carried out rituals to appease the sea before sailing aboard a renamed ship. As if to confirm this belief, the *Commodore* was caught in a storm heading north, from San Francisco to Victoria, and almost sank in 1858[81] . To avoid plunging to the bottom, the crew threw cargo and baggage, including 12 horses, over the side. The lightened ship limped back to port without loss of life. "The greatest indignation was expressed against the owner

of the vessel for sending her to sea, and some very unpleasant demonstrations made to force a repayment of the passage money, which in most cases was acceded to."[82]

Perhaps chastened by that experience and perhaps other close calls, Captain Wright sold the *Commodore* to the California Steam Navigation Company in 1861[83]. The third deck was removed and the hull was copper plated. But only a few rotten hull planks were refitted. Now overhauled, the *Commodore* was once again named *Brother Jonathan* and resumed its scheduled passage of San Francisco, Portland, Puget Sound, and Victoria under the command of Captain Samuel I. DeWolf.

On the evening of 15 July 1865, the *Brother Jonathan* collided with the barque *Falkenburg* on the Columbia River near Portland, Oregon.[84] The steamer was then anchored for repairs at Astoria, Oregon. Captain DeWolf wanted the ship taken to dry dock for extensive repairs which implies his concern over the ship's seaworthiness. The owners did not see it that way as there was money to be made if she stayed in service. Most newspaper accounts of the time reported the event as minor, probably at the behest of the owners.

While the shipwreck's loss of life, from the sinking of the *Brother Jonathan,* was the worst known on the west coast at the time, the notoriety was enhanced by the loss of something else: treasure. Tantalizingly close to shore, north of $50 million (today's value) in gold bars and newly minted double eagle gold coins lay at the bottom along with a safe containing jewels and more gold. Almost

immediately after the disaster, ships and divers began a search for the treasure but without success. The depth combined with strong currents defeated salvage efforts.

The location of the wreckage was discovered in 1993, and gold was retrieved in 1996 by Deep Sea Research (DSR) who auctioned it off in 1999. The auction yielded $6.3 million of which 20% went to the State of California in an initial settlement. “After a lengthy court battle over rights to the shipwreck, the state of California was awarded the title to the ship along with all non-monetary artifacts (United States Supreme Court 1998).”[85]

Chapter Ten

Postscript - The Remaining Family

As previously mentioned, Harriet was committed to the state hospital in Stockton in 1867. In the commitment papers, there is reference to the loss of her children, plural. This implies that not only had she lost young Frank Parrish, but that she had lost another child. It appears that at least one child lived, Charles H. Parrish. Another child, Henry Clark Parrish, may have survived. He appears in the 1870 federal census, age 12, living with Ransom Parrish. It appears he is not the son of Ransom Parrish because Ransom's wife Adelia was 48 years old when the child was born. The child, Henry, is also not enumerated with the Ransom household in 1860 when he would have been 2 years old.

Son, Charles Haraszthy Parrish was born in 1854 in California, and it is probable that Harriet was pregnant with Charles just after the overland journey to Shasta. Charles married Louise J. Vernett 25 April 1879 and fathered two

children, Louis Bodecker Parrish and Grace Harriett Parrish. By 1887 he was an officer of the Improved Order of Red Men, Manzanita Tribe No. 4. This fraternal organization claimed descent from the Sons Of Liberty and was associated with Freemasonry. Charles worked for Westoff & Co., a firm providing shipping consignee services. He died 26 March 1908.

Son, Henry Clark Parrish was born in July 1858, in San Francisco. He married, 1890, Isabel Loughlin. They had two sons: Charles Daniel Parrish and Earl Trowbridge Parrish. He was a San Francisco resident for many years until the 1906 earthquake when he moved across the bay to Alameda. He died 4 August 1926 at Oakland.

Brother Ransom Parrish (1810-1877), the oldest brother of Daniel, did not join his brothers at San Francisco until 1862. He married Adelia Lowell about 1830 at Rockport, Cuyahoga, Ohio. They had two sons, Norman B. Parrish and William H. Parrish. Ransom worked primarily as a carpenter. At Baraboo, Wisconsin he was elected officer of weights and measures. Ransom was interred at Colma, San Mateo County, California.

Brother Loomis Parrish (1822-1884) married Frances Ann Burlin in 1852 in Sauk County, Wisconsin. They had Clara Parrish. He owned a livery stable at Baraboo, Wisconsin and had been elected constable there. He removed his family to Eau Claire, Wisconsin by 1870 where he acted as an auctioneer and owned a new and second-hand store. He briefly traveled to San Francisco in

1883 to attend the grand reunion of the Knights Templar. He is buried in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Brother Caleb Parrish (1826-1900) married Mary Bow on 20 February 1851 at Fox Lake, Dodge County, Wisconsin. They had 3 children: Emma Parrish, George Parrish, and Anna Parrish. By 1870 he removed with his family to Oregon and plied his trade as a carpenter but also continued his musical career. He and his brothers were pioneer musicians in the Great Lakes area before their move west. In San Francisco he was a member of the Mechanics' Band. In Oregon he opened a dance school in Salem. When he moved to Portland, he played with the Tom Parrott Band. He was well known as he was the prompter at many of the area dances. His grave is located in Lone Fir Cemetery in Multnomah County, Oregon.

Brother Nathan Parrish (1828-1898) married Julia Diggins. The two were married just before the journey to California in 1852 and spent their honeymoon on the prairie traveling west. They had four children: Cora B. Parrish, Harry Arden Parrish, Frank Parrish, and Ellis Howard Parrish. During the California Gold Rush period, he owned a tub and pail company which prospered for years until he sold it. Nathan eventually became an insurance agent in San Francisco for the Fireman's Fund Insurance Company. He was buried at Laurel Hills Cemetery in San Francisco.

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